



State of Connecticut COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Central Office ~ 25 Sigourney Street, 7th Floor, Hartford, CT 06106

Promoting Equality and Justice for all People

Testimony to the Education Committee

Monday March 7, 2016

S.B. No. 379, AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT TASK FORCE.

Senator Slossberg, Representative Fleischmann, Senator Boucher, Representative Lavielle, and members of the Education Committee:

The Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) **supports** S.B. No. 379, AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MINORITY TEACHER RECRUITMENT TASK FORCE.

The CHRO supports the extension of time for this task force to continue its work to study and develop strategies to increase and improve the recruitment, preparation and retention of minority teachers, as defined in Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-155/ of the general statutes, in public schools in the state. This task force was only established by Public Act 15-108. This Act would extend the time period for the task force to complete its report on the recruitment and retention of minority individuals into the teaching profession; it would also work on encouraging minority middle and high school students to enter college in teacher preparation programs and continue efforts to develop alternative routes into teaching for individuals in other professions.

Currently, teachers are overwhelmingly Caucasian¹ and it is important for Connecticut student's to experience diversity in their educational settings. In many school districts, students of color make up over one-half of all students. It is important that they are able to see themselves, or people who look like them, in front of the classroom. Finally, it has been shown that diverse teaching staff is more effective in developing relationships with a diverse student body.

Finally, it is critical to determine whether the Praxis or any other testing issues are adversely impacting the ability of minority teachers to successfully complete their educational programs and become effective classroom teachers. In the event that there is a racially adverse impact on the test results that are not explained by legitimate reasons, there may be a need to explore alternative testing methods.

The CHRO supports extending this program.

I thank you for allowing us to submit testimony on this bill.

¹ <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/20/education/teaching-degree-minority-enrollment-lags-study-shows.html? r=0>